

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 1, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer,

Thank you for your leadership in passing legislation to provide urgently needed assistance to the American people as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Congress considers additional legislation to respond to this public health crisis, we urge you to prioritize addressing the mental health needs of young adults, whose academic and financial futures have been upended. Specifically, we ask that you include the bipartisan H.R. 4327 Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act in upcoming legislation to address COVID-19. Enacting the principles of H.R. 4327 into law would go a long way toward addressing the unmet mental health needs of our nation's college students.

It is clear that the lives of teenagers and young adults have been disrupted by this pandemic. The Crisis Text Line, a national crisis counseling service, recently reported an increase in call volume from 18 to 24-year-olds. Starting in early April, the Crisis Text Line was seeing between 47 to 116 percent more texts per day than it received on an average day before the COVID-19 crisis. As a result of this pandemic, teenagers and young adults are facing lost social contact, disruption or cancellation of major life events, loss and grief from the death of family members, family disputes, and increased domestic abuse.

It is deeply concerning that young adults are experiencing an increased need for emotional support and suicide prevention services, especially considering that even before the COVID-19 crisis, teen and young adult mental illnesses were increasing. In the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 15-24 years old. In 2018, more than 300,000 college students attempted suicide and 1,400 died by suicide. Last summer, the American Council on Education released a study that found that more than half of college presidents need additional tools to address students' mental health needs.

Now is the time for Congress to step up in a bipartisan way to address the mental health needs of college students. Current federal education policy does not outline a role for the U.S. Department of Education in encouraging institutions of higher education to implement mental health support or suicide prevention plans. H.R. 4327 amends the Higher Education Act to promote positive mental health among college students and encourage comprehensive planning to prevent suicide on college campuses.

More specifically, H.R. 4327 Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act would require the Department of Education to coordinate with the Department of Health and Human Services to encourage institutions of higher education to develop and implement comprehensive mental health and suicide prevention plans. These comprehensive plans will align with the recommendations of the Suicide Prevention Resource Center strategies, specifically its nine-part Comprehensive Approach to Suicide Prevention. This common sense legislation will not impose new requirements or financial burdens on institutions of higher education. H.R. 4327 is endorsed by many of the preeminent advocacy organizations that focus on addressing young people's mental health needs.

The evidence-based strategies outlined in H.R. 4327 will go a long way toward meeting the mental health needs of our nation's young adults during and after this crisis. Colleges and universities are trusted institutions that are well-situated to support the mental health needs of their students. We believe that if institutions of higher education are better equipped by the federal government with the tools to address the mental health needs of their students, we can mitigate the traumatic stress that many college students are experiencing.

We respectfully request that you enact H.R. 4327 Enhancing Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Through Campus Planning Act as part of legislative efforts to respond to COVID-19. This pandemic will only exacerbate the unmet mental health needs of college students. Together, we must ensure that critical mental health support is available to young people in need and that we support the long-term health of our communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Wild", written in a cursive style.

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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Fitzpatrick", written in a cursive style.

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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



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Kendra S. Horn  
Member of Congress



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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Lauren Underwood  
Member of Congress

/s/

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David Trone  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



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David Cicilline  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/

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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress